



Help End  
Homelessness

# 1. What is homelessness?

**Not all people facing homelessness face the same challenges.**

**And some people facing homelessness are not as visible as others.**

# Here are some useful definitions.

## Statutory homelessness

Local authorities have a duty to find a home for families or individuals approaching them who fit 'priority need' criteria. These households are initially offered temporary housing such as private sector housing, nightly paid accommodation or B&Bs.

### Did you know?

'Priority need' households include those with dependent children, pregnant women, those threatened with homelessness due to an emergency e.g. a flood, and those who are vulnerable.

### Did you know?

Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, councils have a duty to prevent or relieve the homelessness of all eligible people threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

## Individuals experiencing homelessness

Individuals or couples without dependent children who are homeless but don't meet 'priority need' criteria do not qualify for accommodation from their local authority. Many stay in short-term accommodation, such as hostels or supported accommodation provided by homelessness charities, sleep rough or remain hidden.

## Rough sleeping

This is the most visible form of homelessness and includes sleeping anywhere outside or in buildings not designed for human habitation such as stairwells, stations or cars.

### Did you know?

Rough sleeping accounts for less than 1% homelessness<sup>1</sup>

## Hidden homelessness

Many people who become homeless aren't counted in official figures. They may not ask for, or be entitled to, help with housing, and so won't receive the support they need. Many "sofa surf" with family and friends or sleep out of sight in hostels, squats, public transport or other insecure and unsuitable accommodation.

1 - <https://www.bigissue.com/latest/social-activism/how-many-people-are-homeless-in-the-uk-and-what-can-you-do-about-it/>



homeless link

Minorities House  
2-5 Minorities  
London  
EC3N 1BJ  
UK

[info@homelesslink.org.uk](mailto:info@homelesslink.org.uk)  
[www.homelesslink.org.uk](http://www.homelesslink.org.uk)

Company number 4313826  
Charity number 1089173

---

The Forrester Trusts

This publication has been made possible with financial support from the Gwyneth Forrester Trust